23

A

SERMON

694.l.17.
23

Preached before the HONOURABLE

HOUSE *of* COMMONS,

AT

St. *Margaret's Weſtminſter*,

On *Tueſday, January* 30, 1749-50.

Being the Anniverſary of the *Martyrdom* of K. CHARLES I.

By EDWARD BENTHAM, D.D.
Fellow of *Oriel* College, *Oxford*.

OXFORD,

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K

Dup

Mercurii, 31° *die Januarii* 1749.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this Houſe be given to the Reverend Dr. *Bentham* for the Sermon by him preached Yeſterday before this Houſe at St. *Margaret's Weſtminſter*; and that he be deſired to print the ſame; and that Mr. *Godolphin* and Mr. *Hoblyn* do acquaint him therewith.

J. Dyson,
Cl. Dom. Com.

[redacted]

1 TIM. II. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men;

For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty.

WHILE we attend the ſacred offices appointed for this ſolemnity, and lament the ſins of our fore-fathers, it is our indiſpenſable duty to cultivate within ourſelves ſuch principles, as may preſerve us from *ſinning according to the ſimilitude of their tranſgreſſions.* With this view I have ſelected the words of the text, as a proper ſubject of our ſerious reflexion. They point out a very important End, and the Means neceſſary to obtain it.

The End is *a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty:* which is here repreſented as

beſt ſecured by paying a due regard to the welfare of *all men*, the welfare of *the king*, and of *all that are in authority*. Nor can this be recommended to us in ſtronger terms, than by exhorting us to make it the ſubject of our prayers to almighty God.

That ſuch a life is highly deſireable will not be denied. And if any perſon can doubt, whether *all men* are intitled to this and every other advantage of their Being, which they can innocently procure, he may, for a convincing proof, be referred to what we all feel with reſpect to Ourſelves and Others. Are we not inceſſantly prompted to ſecure and improve our own welfare? Is not this the leſſon of Nature to every man? What more obvious, than to preſume from hence, that, according to the regular order of Nature, every man may ſeverally put this leſſon in practice for himſelf; and that it is by no means the intent of God, the author of Nature, that men ſhould obſtruct each other in doing ſo?

Again, the human breaſt is formed to ſympathize with other men; to remove, or at leaſt to commiſerate their diſtreſs. And whenever we inflict unmerited pain; or, whenever we neglect to relieve it according to the acknowledged meaſure of our abilities, we feel our conduct arraign'd

at

at the bar of Conſcience, condemned, and puniſhed with preſent uneaſineſs and remorſe: And we go on to anticipate the ſentence of a future tribunal, unknown indeed as to the circumſtances of its proceedings, but ſtill the object of moſt rational as well as awfull apprehenſions.

To prevent mutual obſtructions in the road to happineſs, to provide for our defence againſt injuries, to improve the gifts of nature, and to adapt them more effectually to the ſupply of our wants and to the gratification of our reaſonable deſires, is the immediate end of civil policy.

By entring into this ſtate men engage themſelves to the performance of ſeveral good offices, which appear not ſtrictly obligatory in the caſe of natural independency: they take their ſtations to miniſter to the good of others, juſtly expecting a ſuitable return.

Civil ſociety then lays a burthen on its members; and is doubtleſs attended with ſome inconvenience. But it brings with it not only numberleſs advantages, but ſomething likewiſe of Dignity, ariſing from the truſt repoſed in each perſon. And the general privileges, to which men, in free ſtates eſpecially, are intitled under that character, may well be conſidered as one degree

of

of preeminence; which, whatever it be, is guarded not leſs by the injunctions of Scripture than of Reaſon. [a] *Render to All their dues.* [b] *Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch.*

But beſides this rank, whereof All the members of civil ſociety are partakers, Some are more properly ſaid to be in a ſtate of preeminence and *authority* ἐν ὑπεροχῇ: ſuch are Magiſtrates, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate; all of them ordained to labour and watch for the publick welfare according to the many exigencies of human affairs; whether it be to protect their fellow-citizens by their courage; to guide them by their counſels; to aſſign them occupations adapted to their natural or acquired endowments; to ſeaſon their minds with a ſenſe of duty, and to incline them to obſerve it; to decide controverſies by their prudence; by their diligence to diſcover, and by their activity to puniſh the diſturber of domeſtick or civil happineſs. For theſe purpoſes the Superiour muſt neceſſarily be inveſted with ſuch command over the ſtrength of the community, as may ſupport and protect him in exerciſing the invidious parts of his of-

a Rom. 13. 7. b 1 Theſſ. 4. 6.

fice;

fice; nor is he leſs intitled to ſuch honours and emoluments, as may, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, reward its painfulneſs.

Among the various models of civil government, it is not eaſy to ſay univerſally, Which of all others is the moſt expedient, moſt likely to anſwer the great end of its inſtitution. For this queſtion can not well be determined, even in theory, without a due regard to the circumſtances of the people to be governed, their complexion and temper, with the nature and extent of their territory as relative to neighbouring ſtates and kingdoms. And it is happy for the *peace* and *quiet*, for the *godlineſs* and *honeſty* of mankind, that Providence has generally precluded our choice by the circumſtances of our birth; without giving us leiſure to ask counſel of our ambition and fancy; from whence we could receive no anſwer, but ſuch as would involve us in endleſs perplexities. But thus much is certain; that the divine government is vainly urged as the only proper model for man to follow. We confeſs it to be perfect; for this reaſon, that God's wiſdom and goodneſs are both of them commenſurate to his power. And whenever any mortal man can make good his claim to theſe attributes, the freeſt citizen will do well to throw him-

himſelf implicitly under ſuch direction. But, in this imperfect ſtate of things, the ableſt and beſt muſt be contented to have their ſeveral defects ſupplied by the friendly admonition and guidance of others. A wiſe man will eſteem it a great happineſs to meet with ſuch aſſiſtance; and will dread nothing more, than the being [a] *given up to walk in his own counſels.*

And it is ſurely for the common intereſt both of Magiſtrate and Subject, that the authority of wiſe counſellors ſhould always be allowed its influence: it is deſireable, that limits to the exerciſe of power may be deſcribed, with as much accuracy as the mixt circumſtances of human affairs will permit; leaving ſo much only to Prerogative, as may anſwer the caſe of unforeſeen emergencies: it is deſireable, that there never may be wanting guards and watchmen to the virtue either of Prince or People; ſo that no branch of power may be without its check, the paſſions of none without controll.

To have the benefit of ſuch a Conſtitution is a happineſs ſomething ſingular: And in ſpeculation it ſhould ſeem a thing ſtill more extraordinary, that they, who enjoy it by a legal right, ſhould either be inſenſible of the bleſſing, or pervert it

a Pſ. 81. 12.

into

into a miſchief. But in fact, under all conſtitutions, Governors and Subjects are apt to regard each other with an eye of jealouſy, often injurious to Both. They who have never felt the diſtreſſes peculiarly incident to men of inferior condition, do not always regard them with due compaſſion. By flatterers they are led to imagine themſelves to be almoſt as different from others in nature, as they are in ſtation; unuſed to contradiction, they will not bear even that of their friends; being born to the poſſeſſion of power, they think their tenure of it to be indefeaſible, their uſe of it not liable to controll. Beſides this, they are often taught to be ſuſpicious of others, become fearful, and, which is a natural conſequence of fear, oppreſſive, and even cruel.

On the other hand, every reaſonable creature is conſcious of a dignity inherent in himſelf; and this tempts him to diſdain paying ſubmiſſion to others. Nay where men cannot help acknowledging themſelves diſgraced by vice or folly, they are very apt to take comfort in believing, even their Governors to be no better than themſelves; thence are eaſily led to imagine them worſe, and to repreſent them as ſuch to the world. Moreover diſtinctions of wealth and power are ſo far from extinguiſhing the ſenſe of our natural equality, that they often aggravate the uneaſineſs

ſineſs of being ſubject to thoſe, who ſeem to have no better a pretenſion to ſuperiority than their good fortune. Add to this, that inconvenience, want, and pain are inſeparable from the life of man in his preſent condition. So that Envy at what others enjoy, Pride in the conceit of our own deſerts, and Diſcontent under what we feel, conſpire jointly to render us impatient under preſent evils, and ready to impute them to a wrong cauſe, to any rather than to our own fault. And, misbehaviour being one conſiderable ſource of evil, every man complains loudly, if Government doth not prevent it in others, which is not always poſſible; and yet highly reſents its being corrected in himſelf, however neceſſary. When we feel the ſmart ariſing from obſtructions in the body politick, we readily charge our Superiours, if not with illwill, yet with folly or neglect. Where was their foreſight? Why was not Authority exerted ſeaſonably and with proper ſpirit? But no ſooner is the arm of government extended, than we hold it back; we demand the warrant of Law; and exclaim, that incroachments are made upon the ſacred ground of Liberty. --- Apprehenſions of danger in this reſpect are often juſt; and were even neceſſary in that unhappy reign, which this day's ſolemnity brings into our remembrance; when illegal demands

were

were made upon the ſubject, [a] *under the notion of imminent neceſſity*; when, in order to ſupport theſe *demands, in a Court of Law, reaſon of ſtate was urged as elements of Law*; --- when *judgment of Law was grounded upon matter of fact, of which there was neither enquiry nor proof*; --- when *theſe demands were adjudged, as a right, by ſworn Judges of the Law, upon ſuch grounds and reaſons, as every ſtander-by was able to ſwear was not Law.*

What indeed is Law, what are the boundaries and meaſures of the Magiſtrate's authority, and the Subject's obedience, muſt be known from the Conſtitution of each particular country. Chriſtianity doth not concern itſelf about the diſtribution of civil rights and privileges. Our Saviour has told Us as well as the Jews, that [b] *his kingdom is not of this world.* He came indeed to reform and give law to the religion and morals of the world; but not to overturn the civil eſtabliſhments of it, or even to alter them, otherwiſe, than as the doctrines of univerſal goodwill and virtue muſt needs promote the happieſt alteration in human affairs. After his example St. Peter and Paul in their ſeveral injunctions, direct their converts to mend themſelves and not the State; to [c] *live peaceably with all men*; to live

a Clar. Hiſt. V. 1. p. 54. b Joh. 18. 36. c Rom. 12. 18.

peaceably under [a] whatever government they found to be eſtabliſhed; and to give no umbrage to *the higher powers*, or pretence for ſuſpecting them of any deſign to embroil the State, under the notion of Jeſus being Their King. For it is well known, that the Jews had it ſtrongly fixed in their minds, (becauſe it was connected with their idea of the Meſſiah,) that he was to be a temporal prince. Such precaution therefore was highly expedient to preſerve the Jewiſh Chriſtians from entertaining the conceit, that Chriſtianity was not only intended to redeem them from the dominion of Sin, but to aboliſh their ſubjection to the Romans.

So that whatever pretenſions or claims men have upon one another, Chriſtianity doth not at all interfere; it doth not enlarge the power of the Superiour; and no more ſtraitens the privileges, than it cancels the obligations, of the Inferiour. It repreſents the Magiſtrate, to be [b] *the miniſter of God for good.* It exhorts the Subject, [c] *ſo to uſe the things of this world as not to abuſe them*; and, [d] *however free, not to abuſe his liberty:* [e] *to ſubmit to every ordinance of man,* if not in proſpect of immediate advantage, yet [f] *for the Lord's ſake*, and *for conſcience towards God.*

a Rom. 13. 1. b Rom. 13. 4. c 1 Cor. 17. 31. d 1 Pet. 2. 16. e 1 Pet. 2. 13. f Rom. 13. 5.

Nor

Nor are theſe directions leſs beneficial in their effects, than authoritative in their obligation. When power is exerciſed conſcientiouſly for the good of inferiours, they will, in point of prudence, be led to ſtrengthen the hands of their governors. And a wiſe magiſtrate, upon the ſame principle, will reverence every legal claim of the ſubject; will cut off all occaſion of diſcontent; and be careful, not to encroach upon the Liberty of the People, leſt in the event he may impair his own authority. On the whole,

The practical uſe of the doctrine implied in the Text extends to All orders and degrees, indeed to every member of the body politick. And the great importance of obſerving it, appears in the hiſtory of almoſt every kingdom; but in none more ſtrongly than in our own. There we may read, how every rank and order was guilty in its turn of thinking of itſelf too highly; and, in conſequence of that overweening opinion, aſſumed to itſelf powers, which the Conſtitution did not warrant; till at length, [a] *the whole head became ſick; the whole heart faint; from the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there was no ſoundneſs. --- Our country became deſolate, and our cities burned with fire.*

a Iſa. 1, 5, 6, 7.

But

But the preſent ſolemnity calls upon me to give this matter a more diſtinct illuſtration.

Firſt then, View the Sovereign; adorned by all that train of perſonal and ſocial virtues, which are the object of eſteem and reverence; his mind enriched with ſuch liberal accompliſhments, as grace the Scholar and the Gentleman; elegant in the cultivation, and magnificent in the diſplay of politer arts; at the ſame time earneſt in his wiſhes, that his people might adorn the kingdom by their piety and virtue, Himſelf the great example of both. His conſciouſneſs of upright intentions gave him zeal for what he conceived to be his juſt authority; while a vain Theory of Government, unhappily imbibed in his early years, too much diverted his attention from following the ſafer guidance of national Laws. It was his further misfortune to be flattered into an opinion, that Law and Goſpel were ready to ſupport his unconſtitutional proceedings. Many of the Sages of both theſe profeſſions conſpired to load the Crown with jewells taken from the fortunes and liberties of the Subject: And the Monarch in return readily favoured the authority of Thoſe, who appeared ſo kindly diſpoſed to enlarge His prerogative.

But

But when the legal boundaries between authority and liberty were ſo far tranſgreſſed, that the notoriety of the incroachments could no longer be diſſembled; when ſubmiſſion to theſe incroachments was demanded as a Right; in this caſe, it ſeemed but juſtice to Poſterity for the Commons to aſſert the claims, which Providence had made the birth-right of Engliſhmen. They could not acquieſce in offering up ſuch valuable intereſts at the ſhrine of deſpotick power: The experiment they knew would be dangerous even in the beſt of times; the miſchief irretrievable, when another king ſhould ariſe with leſs virtue than K. *Charles* I.

Short and unhappy therefore was the triumph of Power over the Law and the Conſtitution. And the men, who had been moſt active in adminiſtring it, ſoon found it turned with great ſeverity againſt themſelves, and with unexampled violence againſt their Maſter. For where ſhall we meet with ſo glaring an inſtance of the inſtability of human greatneſs as in the fortunes of this unhappy Prince! For a time [a] *his royal word was with power*; His authority without controll. But Behold him ſoon after, deſpoiled of rights, the foundation whereof had never yet been queſtioned;

[a] Eccleſ. 8. 4.

ſtioned; and that, by the arts of men whom he deſpiſed; Behold him obliged to court theſe men; and, what is worſe, often to court in vain; or ſucceed, only to be betray'd by them: Behold him driven out of thoſe Conſtitutional regalities, which were neceſſary for the protection of the Subject, and for the execution of the Laws!

And now in this evil [a] *day of trouble and rebuke*, when all the ſuccours of Law and Goſpel were wanted to ſtem the torrent of faction and diſloyalty; [b] *the faces* of thoſe, who ſhould diſpell theſe clouds of miſchief, had all of them *gathered blackneſs*. Fear and anguiſh were upon the eſtabliſhed Teachers of Both; they [c] *ſtole away, as men that were aſhamed*; none could *exhort or rebuke* with efficacy; their authority, like that of their royal maſter, by being ſtretched beyond its meaſure, had loſt its ſtrength and was become uſeleſs.

It is unneceſſary to dwell particularly on the injuries and ſufferings, which this afflicted Monarch underwent in conſequence of theſe things, notwithſtanding his renouncing every dangerous prerogative, notwithſtanding his repeated propoſals for the rectifying paſt errors and the reſtoration of the publick tranquillity; which were

a Iſa. 37. 3. b Joel 2. 6. c 2 Sam. 19. 3.

voted

voted to be a ſufficient ground for treating with him, and were accepted as ſatisfactory. But it is highly requiſite to obſerve, in order to do ſome further juſtice to his character, that the ill treatment of his enemies diſcloſed to the world a compoſure of mind in Him, every way becoming the dignity of a King; and ſuch a patient, meek and forgiving ſpirit, as nothing but the faith of a Chriſtian could inſpire; ſuch virtues in ſhort, as gave him a manifeſt ſuperiority over thoſe who had gain'd the command of his perſon, and [a] *made* him in his Death, *more than Conqueror*.

Let us now turn our eyes to the other parts of our conſtitutional government. The profeſſed and perhaps, generally ſpeaking, real ground of the oppoſition, made by the members of them at firſt to the meaſures of the king, was the preſervation of Liberty and Juſtice. But ſome of them by their known diſaffection, unreaſonable jealouſies, or immoderate reſentments, had contributed not a little to produce or increaſe the appearances of danger to the Publick, at which they took the alarm. And many of theſe were tempted by degrees to venture upon ſuch practices, and at laſt to avow ſuch principles alſo, as

[a] Rom. 8. 37.

were utterly unworthy of that noble cauſe they boaſted of being engaged in, and inconſiſtent with that admirable plan of power, which, they had declared, it was their whole intention to ſupport. Particulars may be diſputable: nor would it be either uſeful or proper, in a diſcourſe of this nature, to enter into a minute diſcuſſion of them. But thus much cannot be denied, and ought never to be forgot; that the Nobles, to whom the Conſtitution had aſſigned the glorious employment of mediating between King and People, did neglect to a ſad degree their high truſt of being guardians to the rights of Both. Some of them were faithleſs to one another, and treacherous to the king. They permitted, they rejoiced at outrages and inſults committed on one part of their own aſſembly, thereby opening a breach to wound themſelves. They fondly accepted a ſhare of the ſpoils of Royalty; they wore them for a ſhort ſeaſon; but at length loſt all their own importance, were uſed contemptuouſly by the Commons, to whoſe Leaders they had been too obſequious, and by whom they were finally declared to be an Order of men both uſeleſs and dangerous.

Nor leſs melancholy is the view of that other part of the Legiſlature, which was ordained for the

the more immediate defence of liberty. Happy would have been its efforts, if the diſintereſtedneſs of its ruling party had kept pace with their activity, or their virtue with their ſtrength! But they did not know, at leaſt they did not command themſelves; nor direct the popular turbulence, which they had raiſed, to any other than private purpoſes of their own. From juſt indignation and caution they were led to unjuſt reſentment and ſuſpicion; and knew not how or where to ſtop. So that under colour, and poſſibly with intention of preſerving the birth-right of the people, they deſtroyed it: And partly pretending, and partly imagining themſelves forced by the neceſſity of the times, they erected themſelves into a court of the ſame arbitrary cenſure and inquiſition, which they had been blaming in the King and other Courts; and by the ſuppreſſing whereof they had encreaſed their importance and power. But what was their own fate? They were ſcarce ſettled on the ruins of the antient Conſtitution before they found themſelves controll'd, and part of their members ſecluded by that very military force, which they had employed for their own advancement; and were at length diſſolved by it, with the groſſeſt marks of inſolence and contempt. Thus, [a] *they ſunk down in the pit that*

[a] Pſ. 9. 15.

they made; in the ſame net which they hid, was their foot taken.

Each of theſe new Powers, in its turn, was no leſs oppreſſive to their native Country, than unauthorized by the Conſtitution of it. And, if any part of the adminiſtration of K. *Charles* I. [a] *chaſtiſed the people with whips*, may we not truly ſay, that firſt the Parliament, then *Cromwell chaſtiſed them with ſcorpions?* For what a ſubverſion of publick order do we meet with in this part of hiſtory? What invaſion of private Property? What deſolation in the ſeats of Learning? What rapine of publick Charities? What profanation of things Sacred? --- Let ſuch as think proper to exult in the triumphs of This pretended Hero, let them, I ſay, remember, that if He was the ſcourge of Other nations, he was ſo likewiſe of This: if they urge the ſucceſſes of His military atchievements in diſparagement of Other governors, they ſhould reflect that by a long ſeries of civil wars, the Engliſh were become, as it were, a Nation of Soldiers; and that He had made ſuch advantage of the publick diſtractions, as to bow down the necks of the people as one man. In theſe circumſtances we can no more wonder that he became ſucceſsful, than we ought to envy the means of his becoming ſo.

[a] 1 Kings 12. 11.

The

The truth is, that whatever temporary advantages may ariſe from abſolute military government: And however it may pleaſe *God to turn the fierceneſs of men* poſſeſſed of it to *his own praiſe*, uſing them as inſtruments of mercy on ſome occaſions, as well as of correction on many more: yet neither are their characters to be honoured for this, nor their dominion wiſhed for. [a] *Envy Thou not the oppreſſor, and chooſe none of his ways.*

But to return,

The eccleſiaſtical part of the Conſtitution underwent the ſame calamity, and from the ſame unhappy cauſes. The rulers of the Church, though ſincerely pious and ſincerely Proteſtants, were too aſſuming, too rigid and ſevere, both in their own Courts and others, of which they were members. And ſeveral things, that contributed to make them ſo, may be pleaded in their excuſe. The duty of [b] *forbearing one another in love* had not been for many ages duly conſidered by Chriſtians of almoſt any denomination: the very principles of Toleration were not well underſtood in the world; much leſs the beneficial effects of it ſufficiently known by experience. Add to this, that their Adverſaries were not by any means of a

a Prov. 3. 31. b Epheſ. 4. 2.

milder

milder ſpirit than themſelves: nor did they profeſs to deſire merely indulgence to their own conſciences, but the overthrow of the Eſtabliſhment, which they declared to be Antichriſtian; and againſt which accordingly, as well as the perſons of thoſe who preſided in it, they employed the utmoſt [a] *bitterneſs and wrath and clamour and evil ſpeaking with all malice:* And yet they made angry complaints of what they ſuffered, as if they had given no provocation. Thus did Error and Reſentment concur with Envy and Avarice to deſpoil Epiſcopacy of its primitive authority and very Being. Presbytery uſurped its place, affecting indeed the ſhew of humility, yet at the ſame time exceeding in reality both the rigour and haughtineſs of thoſe, whom it had ſo lately and immoderately accuſed of [b] *lording it over God's heritage.* But This, in its turn, became ſlighted, deſpiſed, and inſulted by numberleſs Enthuſiaſts, moſt of them, ariſing from the dregs of the people. And the final conſequence of their [c] *envying and ſtrife was confuſion and every evil work.* All, in ſhort, both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical regimen being ſunk in one general ruin, temporary fabricks were ſucceſſively raiſed; but being [d] *daubed with untempered mortar*, and not cemented by the

a Epheſ. 4. 31. b 1 Pet. 5. 3. c Jam. 3. 16. d Ezek. 13. 10.

Laws

Laws of the Conſtitution, they ſoon moulder'd away, or were demoliſhed, to gratify the humour, or ſerve the ends of violent men.

[a] *Whoſo is wiſe will ponder theſe things!* He will conſider them as [b] *our examples, to the end that we ſhould not luſt* after either lawleſs power or lawleſs liberty, temporal or ſpiritual, *as our fathers luſted*; but pay at once a due, and conſiſtent regard to the rights of *All* our *countrymen*, the rights of *All that are in authority*, and the rights of *the King:* every one of which, in their turn, were fatally diſregarded in the times before us, to the ruin of the reſt. And hence we are taught by experience, as well as reaſon, that they have a natural tendency to ſecure each other, and to promote the great end of *leading a peaceable and quiet life in all godlineſs and honeſty.*

In order to cultivate this diſpoſition within ourſelves, St. Paul recommends frequent addreſſes to God on behalf of other men, by *ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks.*

It will be uſeful to conſider the good influence of this method, in regard to our maker, our fellow-creatures, and ourſelves.

a Pſal. 107.43. b 1 Cor. 10. 6.

We

We cannot indeed know, in what manner, what caſes, or what degree, it may pleaſe the Almighty to [a] *reſtrain the ſpirit* or direct the counſels *of Princes*, or work on the minds of their People: We cannot judge, how far it is fitting, or, on the whole, deſireable that He ſhould. It may not be even poſſible for God to beſtow temporal bleſſings agreeably to the ſeveral requeſts of all his Worſhippers. The members of each community will naturally pray for their own advancement in wealth and greatneſs. Theſe are, in part, of a *relative* nature: and what is added to one nation, muſt, in compariſon, lighten the ſcale of ſome other. It is therefore with great reaſon that the Goſpel-*covenant* [b] *eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes*, teaches us to conſider living *in godlineſs and honeſty* as the principal point, and living even *peaceably and quietly*, much more, enjoying affluence and power, as lower additional advantages; which we are to pray for with great ſubmiſſion, at the ſame time that we endeavour to obtain them with faithful diligence. But ſtill, ſo far as they are really good for Us and for the Whole, [c] *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is*, as well as of *that which is to come*. And in particular, Prayer hath the promiſe of being

a Pſ. 76. 12. b Heb. 8. 6. c 1 Tim. 4. 8.

heard;

heard: which God hath in wiſdom graciouſly made to it, becauſe it naturally tends to qualify thoſe *for whom* it is offered, as well as thoſe *who* offer it, for the reception of His mercies.

Our prayers for *other men* cannot entirely loſe their effect on any, excepting ſuch, as are either totally inattentive, or deſtitute of every ſpark of natural goodneſs, loſt to all ſenſe of gratitude, and altogether [a] *without God in the World.* Good men will retain a grateful ſenſe of this our ſolicitude to promote their welfare by our recommendations at the throne of Grace: it will quicken their ambition to *go on from ſtrength to ſtrength*, and to excell in virtue. Nor can even bad men, one would think, help aſſimilating themſelves a little to thoſe who wiſh well to them, and exert themſelves in ſuch a manner on their behalf: Our prayer will contribute ſomething towards ſoftening the moſt obdurate; it will [b] *draw them with the cords of a man*, to endeavour after that, which our diſintereſted perſeverance in begging for them muſt in ſome meaſure convince them to be their true happineſs.

With regard to Magiſtrates more eſpecially, the publick prayer of the Subject is a continual leſſon; an admonition, not leſs likely to be effectual for its coming upon Them indirectly; and

a Epheſ. 2. 12. b Hoſ. 11. 4.

which They can ſcarce fail of applying to Themſelves, as grounded on ſomething more than human authority. Though They may be taught by profane men, that petitions, offered up conſtantly, for *All* Princes and Magiſtrates alike, ought for that reaſon to be regarded only as matter of courſe, and as not deſerving attention, otherwiſe than as ſuch a ceremonious diſplay of homage may have its political uſes; yet the inceſſant conſcientious repetition of this practice will have a double advantage. In ſome favourable interval of ſerious reflexion, it cannot ſurely but excite a lively ſenſe, that the favour of God, and the diſpoſition of their hearts toward Him and His Laws, are matters of importance to the Greateſt as well as the Meaneſt. And theſe inſtructive requeſts being preſented always in the ſame terms cannot diſpleaſe the delicacy of the moſt jealous Governors; who might be apt to miſinterpret the hints of friendly counſel as a ſort of inſult offered to their reputation in point of integrity or prudence.

But whatever effect our prayers may have upon *Others*, they can ſcarce fail of bettering *our own* temper and manners. For, can any thing more powerfully excite us to promote the publick welfare, or more effectually outweigh the intereſts and paſſions, that might tempt us to diſturb or neglect it, than to make the eſtabliſh-

ment

ment and improvement of it the ſubject of our daily requeſt to God? We cannot ſincerely ſo much as deſire this, without being willing to contribute our ſhare to it. And we cannot deſerve or expect it, without being careful to keep all His Commandments.

The bad effects, which prayers offered up by Enthuſiaſts or Hypocrites have ſometimes had on other men, particularly in the times now under our conſideration, are no objection againſt what I have advanced. For occaſional abuſes of any thing, contrary to its natural tendency, are never juſt objections againſt its uſefulneſs. Now the natural tendency of Chriſtian prayer, more eſpecially that part of it which the text enjoins, is directly contrary to Enthuſiaſm; and that of All prayer to Hypocriſy: of which one ſhould not think men could dare to be guilty, (if experience did not ſhew it,) in their ſolemn addreſſes to the ſearcher of hearts. For the inward peace of the Hypocrite, ſuch as it is, muſt be intirely founded in the hopes of remaining unconvicted. Let the maſk be once taken off, whether by his own unguardedneſs, or by the diſcernment of others; we all know, with what fooliſh confuſion his boldneſs is immediately overwhelmed: How ſelf-deſerted, when he finds himſelf grown

contemptible! --- And need I add, that every perfection of God, his majeſty, his knowledge, his goodneſs, and his power --- his majeſty, which we affront; his knowledge, which we vainly think of eluding; his goodneſs, which we abuſe; and his power, which we provoke, --- All theſe attributes will conſpire to terrify, to ſhame and confound thoſe men, whoſe devotions contradict their hearts, and who muſt know that their prayers are an abomination; while they ſuffer the whole tenour of their conduct to give the lye to their formal profeſſions. But at leaſt, exerciſes of Piety will rectifie and improve the affections of All who are not deſperately wicked, and render their behaviour fruitful in acts of publick ſpirit and ſocial beneficence.

St. Paul, in the verſe following the Text, aſſerts that the performance of this duty is *good*, καλὸν, as well as *acceptable to God*. The epithet ſeems to carry a peculiar ſignificancy, well adapted to the circumſtances of the metropolis, in which Timothy reſided; a city, not more remarkable for the general opulence of its inhabitants, than for the ſuperſtitious bigotry and tumultuouſneſs of the Lower ſort, and the flouriſhing ſtate of literature among ſome of the Better.

In oppoſition to that miſchievous zeal for falſe wor-

worſhip, which prevailed There ſo ſtrongly, and at the ſame time to ſilence the impiety of Thoſe, who might, partly from thence, take occaſion to deſpiſe the duty of worſhip in general, St Paul teaches, that benevolent devotion manifeſted in *praying for All men* &c. is the *true* method of living *piouſly*, ἐν εὐσεβείᾳ; and in a manner becoming the *dignity* of a rational creature, ἐν σεμνότητι; and that ſuch worſhip is [a] καλὸν; contains in it much of that moral excellency and *beauty*, which it is the buſineſs of true philoſophy to delineate, and on which the Profeſſors of it uſually deſcant with ſo much rapture.

The truth of this aſſertion in general is extremely evident; and I would appeal to every one's reflexion, whether it is not particularly applicable to thoſe petitions in our Liturgy, which have more immediate reference to our ſocial intereſts.

When Subjects of an inferior rank are diſpoſed to live in unity, peace, and concord, --- and faithfully to ſerve, honour, and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him; --- when Magiſtrates are hearty in their endeavours to execute juſtice, and to maintain truth; --- when the Nobility and Gentry ſhew themſelves endued with grace, wiſdom, and underſtanding; --- when the publick Conſultations are uniformly directed

[a] v. 3. to

to the advancement of God's glory, the good of his church, the ſafety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and his Kingdoms; --- while the King, at the head of All, appears engaged in the noble employment of ſeeking God's honour and glory, and ſtudying to preſerve the people committed to his charge in wealth, peace, and godlineſs; --- when theſe ſupplications of our Liturgy are tranſcribed into our lives and converſations, we may defy the warmeſt Patriot to form a more compleat and amiable picture of civil happineſs.

Let this repreſentation then be admitted to remove a prejudice, to which the duty of Prayer may ſeem liable, from a curſory view of the Hiſtory of the times preceeding and following the tranſaction of This day.

Religion, it ſeems, according to *Some*, was the very thing, which wrought all theſe calamities which we deplore: --- But it was not the Religion of the Goſpel; it was not the Religion, which teaches us to pray *for All men, for Kings, and All that are in Authority.*

What, though ſome Preachers conſpired to handle the word of God deceitfully, and give a divine ſanction to the illegal exactions of King *Charles* I.? --- What, though factious Leaders of the people uſurped *the form of godlineſs*, and *for a pre-*

a pretence amuſed them with *long prayers*, that they might deceive and deſtroy the more? ſtill Chriſtianity, as delivered in Scripture, remains unaffected by theſe abuſes of it.

Let ſuch pretended *Loyaliſts* and *Saints* be treated, as they deſerve, with pity, contempt, or indignation. But let not the religion, which they profeſſed but did not practiſe, be made anſwerable for their crimes. Yea, [a] *let every man*, who can aſſert this, *be a lyar, but God be true*, [b] *who hath commanded no man to do wickedly, nor given any man*, the Clergy leaſt of all, *licence to ſin*.

But with regard to the Clergy of the Church of *England*, it muſt be obſerved, that the horrid proſtitution of Prayer, to be an inſtrument of wickedneſs, was not Their crime: From this they were happily ſecured, if not always by their virtue, at leaſt, by the wiſe conſtitution of our Church, which confined them to the rule of a ſtated Liturgy. --- Neither, among the Sectaries, was it a crime peculiar to *their Teachers*. Whenever the ſhew of piety was wanted [c] *for a cloke of maliciouſneſs*, *Laymen* found themſelves equally gifted. Who more aſſiduous in ſeeking the Lord by prayer, than *Cromwell?* Who more poſitive in declaring, that *the battle was the Lord's*, when He himſelf was to enjoy the ſpoils of victory?

a Rom. 3. 4. b Eccluſ. 15. 20. c 1 Pet. 2. 16.

Let

Let this inſtitution of Prayer then be judged of by its tendency, and not by its perverſion; and it will be found fruitful in every good work. It will animate the man of integrity; it will work ſome change in bad men; check their carreer of wickedneſs; and more or leſs awe and moderate, if it doth not ſtop, the workings of that ſelfiſh policy, which is at enmity with the civil, as well as religious intereſts of men; which it is of general benefit to diſcountenance, and which nothing can effectually ſubdue, but the fear of God.

By thus taking the [a] *preparations of our heart from the Lord*, we ſhall anſwer one great end for which this Anniverſary is continued by the wiſdom of the Legiſlature. From deprecating the ſin and miſchiefs of [b] *being given to change*, we ſhall become much more diſpoſed to acquieſce in that ſtated order, which national wiſdom hath deviſed, for conducting the great machine of government; and renounce ſuch unreaſonable jealouſies, as often occaſion greater evils than they ſeem likely to prevent.

And whoever delights to view, in the Offices appointed for this mournful ſolemnity, the many and great virtues of K. *Charles* I. Whoever feels

a Prov. 16. 1. b Prov. 24. 21.

a juſt

a juſt indignation at thoſe baſe detractions and infamous ſlanders, by which His intentions were traduced while living, and His character vilified after death, muſt ſurely, if he is at all conſiſtent, feel ſtrongly the obligation of extending the ſame fairneſs of mind towards his own Contemporaries; and be ready to diſcourage all undutifulneſs to his preſent Majeſty's perſon and government; by frankly and gratefully owning upon all proper occaſions, what the voice of Sedition cannot deny, though Diſloyalty would fain diſſemble, His inflexible regard to his royal Word, His tenderneſs for the Rights of all his Subjects.

In free States the waves of popular diſcontent will ever be beating ſucceſſively upon different parts of the eſtabliſhed Conſtitution. And this will always afford matter to exerciſe the devotion of the pious, the vigilance of the wiſe, the courage -- and I muſt add, the candor of the brave. A ſpirit truly generous will not fail to oppoſe, in a proper manner, enormities of any kind, when they happen, in government as well as in other things. But whoever tempers his mind with a true ſenſe of religion, will be far better pleaſed to find occaſion of applauding his rulers, than of blaming them; and will abhor the thought of advancing his intereſts, gratifying his reſentments, or ſhewing his abilities for buſineſs, by

catching and improving opportunities to ill-natured purpoſes.

Nor have Superiours a leſs important leſſon to learn on This day: nor will a ſpirit of Religion afford them leſs uſeful inſtruction in it. While they challenge to themſelves that Authority with which the Law hath inveſted Them, if they cheriſh in their minds a due regard to the juſt judge of All, and to the diſpenſations of Providence, they will with great readineſs acknowledge thoſe Rights and Privileges, which the Law hath equally given to Others, and which are equally objects of the Divine regard.

Indeed the hiſtory of K. *Charles* I. is a ſtanding monument to every Order of men, Temporal or Spiritual, within this Kingdom, that in ſtruggles for Power the advantages gained by thoſe, who ſet up exorbitant claims of any kind, are generally ſhortlived and end ill; whatever their ſucceſs in the beginning may ſeem to promiſe. If their original oppoſers do not recover ſtrength to ſubdue them (which ſometimes happens when it is leaſt thought of), yet even proſperity may infatuate their counſels; or, in the ſtrange and ſudden viciſſitudes to which all great commotions are liable, they may fall a ſacrifice to ſome new and perhaps unſuſpected rival. Conſidered merely

merely as a ſeries of facts, His reign and the enſuing uſurpations afford us this admonition. But, if we further conſider theſe facts as ſuperintended by Divine juſtice, appointed one to follow the other as a due correction, and All to remind us of the importance of keeping God's Laws, and the need of intreating his Grace for ourſelves and one another, the impreſſion will be unſpeakably ſtronger, more laſting and more beneficial.

Let us therefore Now, and often, recollect, as in the preſence of our Maker, and acknowledge before Him, our obligation to diſcharge the duties, which we ſeverally owe our Country: Let us be convinced from Theory, from Experience, but eſpecially from Chriſtian conſiderations, that a hearty good-will to *All men*, a dutiful affection to *the King*, and a juſt reſpect to *All that are in authority*, are the moſt effectual methods of preſerving *peace and quietneſs*, *godlineſs and honeſty* amongſt us, and preventing ſuch ſins and diſorders, as brought on that mournful cataſtrophe, the execrable murder of This day.

FINIS.